

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence  
October 16, 2025 DRAFT

Our Mission is to **love** inclusively, **nurture** spiritual growth and connection,  
freely **explore** life's big questions, and **act** for justice.

Goals for 2025-2026

6:00	Chalice Lighting- Board Member Check-In - What is on your heart/mind?	
	Congregational Comments: (3 minutes per person)	
6:20	Approval of Consent March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September Minutes</li> <li>• Treasurer's Report and Financial Reports</li> </ul>	
<b>Information Items/Reports</b>		
<b>6:30</b>	Board Member UUCL Updates  Minister RE Report Refresh and Renew September Follow up review	
<b>Discussion/Action Items:</b>		
6:45	Strategic Plan Prep Activity (Mary) Google Form (15 mins) <a href="https://forms.gle/qpGTb5NLSbHTiEa6o6">https://forms.gle/qpGTb5NLSbHTiEa6o6</a>  Develop a board covenant -Nori  Accept gift of a bird bath from members of social action and justice in memory of Barb Johnston  Request for approval of purchase of playground materials ??  Approve minister housing allowance \$2500 per month	

	Approve purchase of AED in the amount of \$1900 Appoint Stewardship chair and team Other Items	
	Process review, follow up and Board Member Closing Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Is there anyone you would like to give appreciation to for tonight's meeting?</i></li> <li>● <i>Is there anything you would like to repair/resolve from tonight's meeting?</i></li> </ul>	
Next Board Meeting: November 20 on Zoom Topics/Agenda		

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Important Dates:

- October 23 Board Retreat (time TBD)
- October 26 Fall Fundraiser/Lunch
- November 8 LINK
- November 15 Finance Meeting
- November 20

## Minutes

### Summary

- **Playground Project Approved:** Board approved up to \$2,000 for a new fort-like playset, pending safety review.
- **Safety Measures Emphasized:** Liability concerns raised; consultation with a playground company for safety standards recommended.
- **Financial Updates:** \$2,500 monthly housing allowance approved for minister; 20% health insurance increase noted.
- **AED Purchase for Safety:** Approved \$1,900 AED purchase; includes voice instructions for emergencies and future training planned.
- **Women's Spirituality Group Launch:** New group starting January to support women and inclusivity for all identities.
- **Website Accessibility Improvements:** Need for better email and website accessibility acknowledged; improvements to be implemented soon.

## Motions

### 1. **Consent Agenda Approval**

Motion: Approval of consent agenda (September minutes, treasurer's report, financial report).

### 2. **Board Social Event for Holiday Decorating**

Motion: Agreement in principle to host a board social event for holiday decorating in November/December.

- This is consensus, not a formal motion with a vote, so not directly quotable.

### 3. **Acceptance of Gift in Honor of Barbara Johnston**

Motion: Accepting (with alternatives discussed) a memorial gift for Barbara Johnston (bird bath, land acknowledgement plaque, or peace pole).

- "So moved." (Mover: not specified—response to proposal, likely Chris per style)
- No explicit second quoted, but group agrees.

### 4. **Minister's Housing Allowance**

Motion: "I move that the minister's housing allowance is \$2,500 per month. This is a portion of her salary that is allocated this way for tax purposes."

- (Mover: Rilie, Seconded: Chris)

### 5. **Purchase of AED**

Motion: Approval for purchase of an AED in the amount of \$1,900.

- (Mover: Rilie, Seconded: Chris)

### 6. **Approval of Playground Project Expenditure**

Motion: "We approve spending up to \$2,000. The next steps that are required are for Clay to meet with Buildings and Grounds to have detailed conversations around everything, including like lawn care around it, and that there needs to be approval on the direction...pending final approval from Buildings and Grounds that includes due diligence on maintenance and safety."

- (Mover: Rilie, Seconded: Chris)

### 7. **Meta Motion**

Motion: "I move that all motions be made by Rilie and seconded by Chris." (Jokingly, for minutes' amusement)

- (Mover: Brian, inferred from Chris and Rilie's involvement, Seconded: not specified, group laughs)

## Action items

### Clay

- Meet with Buildings and Grounds to discuss detailed playground plans including safety, maintenance, orientation, and cost
- Coordinate with Refresh and Renew and Buildings and Grounds for playground project support and oversight

### Brian Vancil

- Communicate with Kristin about improving E Blast formatting and accessibility
- Assist Kristin and search for tools/resources to improve website visual accessibility

#### **Mary**

- Distribute approved minister housing allowance documentation to Kristin for file

#### **Rilie**

- Convene stewardship committee with Bill and Sheyda to initiate stewardship plans and register for stewardship resources as needed

#### **Board Members**

- Commit to checking board emails regularly (recommended Sunday and Wednesday evenings) and participate in board text group for urgent matters
- Prepare for October 23 strategic planning retreat, complete any pre-work activities as assigned

#### **Kristin**

- Process purchase order for AED for \$1,900 and plan demonstration/training for congregation awareness (23:47)

#### **Notes**

## **Playground Construction Project**

The board approved spending up to \$2,000 for a new 10 by 10-foot playset focused on a fort-like structure, pending detailed safety and maintenance review by Buildings and Grounds.

- Clay presented plans to repurpose a fiberglass slide from the old set and create a playhouse with a sloped roof, open sides, and a small staircase to enhance the playground and outdoor learning space.
- The cost includes renting an auger for post holes and accounts for economic instability increasing material prices.
- Buildings and Grounds will conduct a final review to confirm safe height adjustments, surface materials for fall protection, and maintenance implications like mowing access.
- Board members emphasized liability concerns referencing a past injury and requested consultation with a licensed playground company to ensure compliance and safety standards.
- This approval draws from an existing in-transit fund, not the general budget, and tasks Clay with coordinating further with Buildings and Grounds before construction begins.

## **Board Governance and Communication Practices**

The board agreed to update its board covenant to clarify responsibilities, confidentiality, and communication protocols for smoother operations and accountability.

- The covenant will reinforce confidentiality including the use of headphones during Zoom calls to protect privacy in public or shared spaces.
- Members committed to checking board emails twice weekly, ideally Sunday and Wednesday evenings, with urgent items flagged as “action needed” in the subject line.
- A group text system will be established for quick notifications linking to shared documents, while substantive discussions remain in email or Google Docs.
- The group agreed on assumptions of goodwill, starting and ending meetings on time, and gently steering conversations back on track to maintain productive and respectful meetings.
- Board members will prepare ahead of meetings by reading shared materials to maximize engagement and effectiveness.

## **Financial and Administrative Updates**

The board approved a \$2,500 monthly housing allowance for the minister as part of her salary structure for tax purposes.

- This allowance was unanimously approved to comply with tax regulations enabling a portion of salary to be non-taxable housing benefit.
- The treasurer mentioned a recent 20% health insurance increase impacting budget planning, with more communication forthcoming.
- Discussion included a review of the Mid America regional representative’s offer to assist with financial oversight and potential exploration of socially responsible credit card options, though U.S. Bank products were not favored.

## **Facility and Safety Enhancements**

The board approved purchasing an AED for \$1,900 from the Red Cross to improve building safety.

- The AED includes voice-guided instructions to assist untrained users during emergencies, and the board plans to demonstrate its use at a future service.
- The purchase will be managed by Buildings and Grounds.
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- Discussion included forming a separate garden team to maintain native gardens and address urgent landscaping needs like treating lilac bushes for mold.

## **Programming and Community Engagement**

- The board discussed launching a women's spirituality group starting in January to provide an affinity space for those identifying as women, complementing existing men's and other affinity groups. The group aims to foster connection through shared identity and interests, with inclusivity for trans women confirmed, following UU principles of welcoming diverse identities.
- Additionally, plans for a holiday social event in November or early December were proposed to engage new and existing members in decorating and community building around the church facility.
- Leadership development opportunities will be offered by Rachel T. to educate members on congregational governance and involvement.
- Memorial initiatives for Graham are in progress, including a community day and possibly a Manhattan-themed event reflecting his personality, emphasizing active community service over passive remembrance.

## **Communications Accessibility and Improvements**

The board recognized the need to improve website and email blast accessibility following feedback highlighting excessive images and poor alt text use.

- Kristin, who maintains the website, will be asked to implement accessibility improvements.
- The weekly E Blast was noted as overwhelming, suggesting segmented email lists (e.g., social justice only) to allow members to subscribe selectively and reduce information overload.
- Plans include streamlining calendar links and reducing repeated information to improve user experience, with Brian tasked to coordinate with Kristin on formatting enhancements.
- The group acknowledged the challenge of balancing visual appeal with screen-reader compatibility to serve diverse congregants' needs.